Manga Studio® FOR DUMMIES®

by Doug Hills and Michael Rhodes

Wiley Publishing, Inc.

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About the Author

Doug Hills has been drawing ever since high school. Originally influenced by the superhero comics of the early- to mid-1990s, his style has adapted towards his other favorite genre: manga. Learning and studying techniques from both the East and West, he's constantly striving to create a style that can truly be called his own.

In recent years, he has taken that love and desire for comics onto the Internet with two webcomics: *Place Name Here* and *Chibi Cheerleaders From Outer Space,* which he works on with his wife, Stacey. His webcomic work led him to Ten Ton Studios, where he worked on a story for their book, *Anthologica*, and eventually became a member of the group.

Originally from Chatham, NY, Doug now lives in Logan, UT, with his wife of seven years and their three-year-old daughter, Brady. All told, Doug's a pretty happy and lucky guy.

Dedication

To Ben Tassinari, who taught me what it means to live for today and enjoy life to its fullest.

Author's Acknowledgments

Jeez, where to start.

Special thanks go out to my wife, Stacey, and my daughter, Brady, for their never-ending support and patience. To Mom, Dad, and my entire family for their support and always pushing me to do my best. To the guys at Ten Ton Studios — if it weren't for you guys and your support (and pushing me in front of the right people), I wouldn't have had this opportunity. To Fahim Niaz and the folks at e frontier for offering this project. To Jean Rogers and Steve Hayes at Wiley Publishing for their infinite patience during this whole project.

Special thanks go out to Jason Masters, Joe Brudlos, Lincy Chan, and Teyon Alexander for providing additional artwork for this book. I wanted to show how Manga Studio works for all different artistic styles, and these guys stepped up to the plate. Thanks so much!

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Introduction

It's amazing to think about how much the industry of creating manga and other forms of comics has changed in such a short period of time. It wasn't all that long ago that the sole purpose of computers in the process was to add colors and word balloons to the page. Things like penciling and inking were left to traditional tools because the technology wasn't quite there yet to accurately reproduce the subtle pen and pencil strokes artists use when creating their work. Or if it *was* there, it was pretty darn expensive.

With the advent of the consumer-priced drawing tablet in the late 1990s and the popularity of programs such as Photoshop and Painter, the revolutionary idea of producing art without the need of a traditional pencil, pen, and paper was possible. I certainly thought that it was revolutionary when I decided to go all-digital with my work back in 2003.

Unfortunately, the available art programs still had (what I found to be) frustrating limitations in refining the work. Sure, many of these programs had tools to help draw straight lines or simulate French curves, but they lacked a certain organic feeling in the drawing process. Small things like the ability to rotate the page while drawing (something Photoshop lacks) or being able to lay down a ruler or curve and use that instead of the line and curve tools had a tendency to take me out of the experience. Needless to say, I found myself trying program after program that would have one aspect or another right, but would miss a great deal more.

Then came Manga Studio. Originally a program created and used in Japan for several years, it was translated and brought over to the United States in early 2006. When I finally got my hands on the program, I couldn't believe what I had missed out on. Manga Studio had everything I needed to work on my comics from beginning to end — and then some! I could now treat the canvas like I would a regular piece of paper. I could add all kinds of rulers and guides and use them like their analog counterparts. The pencils felt like pencils, and the pens felt like pens. Manga Studio was *exactly* what I'd been hunting for these past few years.

Manga Studio comes in two flavors: Debut and EX. Manga Studio EX is the full-featured, full-price version. Manga Studio Debut has all the basic tools, commands, and functions that the EX version does, but it lacks a few of the higher-end tools that EX provides. Because of that, Debut is less expensive than EX. This book will work just fine for you, regardless of which version of Manga Studio you're using.

About This Book

To say that Manga Studio is feature rich is a bit of an understatement. If you've used Photoshop before, much of how Manga Studio works will seem somewhat familiar, if not exactly the same. But if the realm of digital art is a brand-new concept to you, you might become overwhelmed at first. Rightly so — Manga Studio is a very dense and robust program. Heck, while going over the program for the purposes of this book, I discovered that I had previously used only about 30 to 40 percent of its full potential.

I think that's actually a great feature of the program; you can use as much or as little as you'd like and still produce the same quality pages. It just depends on what you're looking to do with the program. Still, if you're new to this process, you might not know where to begin so that you *can* create those quality pages.

I had a few goals in mind while writing this book:

- To help you create your first page in Manga Studio, from beginning to end.
- To show how you can work either 100 percent digital or use a combination of digital and traditional tools.
- To explain how the various features in the program work and how they can help save you some time and energy.
- To explain the differences between Manga Studio Debut and Manga Studio EX and help figure out which version is for you. (If you haven't already bought it, of course.)
- To go over both the basic and advanced methods that Manga Studio provides.

Above all, I want to show that while Manga Studio is a lot to take in when you first fire it up, after you get used to how the system works and what tools work best for you, it becomes as intuitive as working with traditional tools. Plus you get to save a few trees. And that's not a bad thing, now is it?

Foolish Assumptions

I don't really know who you are or what your goals are. Hopefully *you* know who you are. (If not, might I suggest *Freud For Dummies?)*

So I can only assume that if you've picked up this book, you:

- Like manga and/or comics.
- *Really* like manga and/or comics.

- Like to draw. Or ink. Or work with screen tones.
- Regularly draw using your computer — or have at least dabbled with it.
- Have purchased or otherwise legally obtained a copy of either Manga Studio Debut or Manga Studio EX. If you haven't bought the program yet, you can install a 30-day demo of the program right from the CD that comes with this book.
- Have installed said program on your computer. (This book is intended for Macintosh and PC versions — that goes for you Linux users running the program under Wine, as well.)
- Aren't sure where to start or are looking to see if there's something you missed after looking through the user manual.
- Aren't sure yet if you want to purchase the program and hope this book will answer any lingering questions you have.

If one or more of the above assumptions fits you, then this book is just the right thing for you. By the way, if you haven't tried drawing or inking digitally, and you're looking to try that out, I highly recommend purchasing a drawing tablet. It's a lot easier to draw with one of those than with a mouse (unless you *really* like a challenge).

Conventions Used in This Book

Throughout the book, I present instructions in a consistent, easy-to-follow format to help you navigate through the program. For example, when I explain how to navigate through the main menu, you'll see an ➪ icon. I use this arrow to define a transition as you go from one menu to another. So when you see something like File➪New➪Page, it means when you use your mouse or drawing tablet stylus, you click File, click New, and then click Page as each respective menu pops up.

Also, because I cover both the PC and Mac versions of the program, I give you keystroke commands for both as I go along, with the Mac commands in parentheses or separated by a slash. For example:

Press Ctrl+C (⌘+C on the Mac).

Press Enter/Return when done.

Oh, and keep in mind that I'm a PC user. (Sorry, just can't make the switch!) I primarily use Windows terminology (for example, I call it a *drop-down list* instead of a *pop-up window),* both for the sake of simplicity and because I just don't know all the proper Mac terms — and I'd hate to screw them up and anger you Mac fans out there.

How This Book Is Organized

The book is written in such a way that you can read it however you want or need to. Each chapter (and section within each chapter) is set up to be independent of the others. So while I may reference other sections of the book that you should check out (and I do that a lot), you can read each section and chapter just as easily as if you read it from cover to cover.

I broke the book down into six parts, each one covering an essential aspect of knowing and understanding Manga Studio.

Part I: Welcome to Manga Studio!

Seems like a pretty good place to start, right? Like I mention earlier, using a program like this for the first time can be pretty intimidating. So this part of the book goes over the basics of the program and the essential and helpful tools you need to know how to use to get your first page started.

Part II: Roughing It

Now, we're getting somewhere! This part of the book is devoted to getting your idea down onto (virtual) paper and chipping away at it until it's exactly how you want it. The chapters in this part take you from starting a new blank page, through the first rough pencil sketches, to creating and working with layers, panels, and rulers, and selecting and transforming objects.

Part III: Refining and Exporting Your Work

When you have your drawing or page exactly how you want it, it's time to polish it up and make it all pretty for everyone to see. The chapters in this part show you how to ink your work, add tones for "color" and dimension, create word bubbles and add text, and export and print your finished pages.

Part IV: Advanced Tips and Tricks

After you know the basics of drawing and refining your page, that's all fine and good, but that can't be all that Manga Studio can do, can it? Nope! You've only scratched the surface of what this program can do to help you streamline your work and potentially speed things along in the process. The chapters in this part of the book cover tips and tricks for making your work easier and quicker, and using Manga Studio EX-only tools.

Part V: The Part of Tens

All For Dummies books include top ten lists. My goal in this part is to include items, ideas, and tips that assist you not only with using Manga Studio, but also to help you as an artist and creator. The part of tens chapters provide you with ten (plus some) great books and online resources, and they discuss ten tips and tricks to make working in Manga Studio quicker, easier, and more fun.

After the Part of Tens chapters is the Appendix, which covers the CD-ROM included with this book. Turn to the Appendix for the lowdown on what's included on the CD-ROM and instructions on how to use it.

The CD also includes three bonus chapters. Bonus Chapters 1 and 2 cover the advanced topics of using vectors and importing 2D and 3D objects. Bonus Chapter 3 gives you background information on manga that may help you if you intend on publishing the comics you create in Manga Studio.

Icons Used in This Book

Every now and then, I have a few "oh yeah, check this out!" moments. It can be something really important to watch out for, or some cute little trick you may not have thought of trying. To help point these out, I give you a few road signs.

This is where I stop you and say, "Hey, you know what? Try this out." You know that the paragraph next to this icon gives you information that can save you time, improve your work, or make your hair shinier.

Here's where I point out something very important that you should keep in the back of your mind while working with the program. Read any warnings carefully — they'll help you avoid losing time and work.

I may be an artist, but I'm also a techie geek. Here's where I go all out with some technical jargon that's only going to matter to you if you're also a techie geek.

I use the Remember icon to point out information you'll want to keep in mind as you're using Manga Studio.

In addition to the book you have in your hands, I provide some sample artwork and photos on the enclosed CD-ROM. The CD also includes a free, 30-day demo version of Manga Studio EX, brought to you courtesy of e frontier. So keep an eye out for this icon — it means more goodies for you!

Where to Go from Here

If you're raring to go create your first comic, jump ahead to Chapter 3 for a quick run-through of creating a page from start to finish. If you've got stacks of drawings on paper and you want to scan them into Manga Studio, turn to Chapter 5. If you're looking for inspiration or further resources on drawing, flip to Chapter 16.

If you'd like to drop me an e-mail, you can head over to my Web site at `www.pnhcomics.com` and click the Contact Us! link. While you're there, you can check out some of my artwork, as well as two webcomics that I've worked on for a few years.

Part I

Welcome to Manga Studio!

The 5th Wave
By Rich Tennant
DENISE AND JERRY LEVIN – AUTHORS OF "LOST IN THE MALL PARKING LOT," "THE MISPLACED GALLERY INVITATION," AND, "THE BAD HAIRCUT – WHY ME?"
Truthfully? If it weren't for Manga Studio, many of these stories would have remained untold.

In this part . . .

So, you either bought a copy of Manga Studio and picked this book up because you aren't exactly sure where to go from here, or maybe you saw this on the bookshelf and would like to know exactly what Manga Studio is. This first part of the book gives you some understanding as to what this program is and what it can do to help you create comics on your computer.

Chapter 1 goes over the basics of Manga Studio, including what you can (and can't) do in the program, as well as a breakdown of the new workspace you'll create your art in. Chapter 2 offers a bit of help to the beginning artist, with some suggestions on what you should buy to make your experience with the program a pleasurable one. I also discuss several comic terms that you'll run into as you continue down this potential career path, as well as offer a few suggestions when you start to feel a bit frustrated at the whole "creating comics" thing. (It'll happen; trust me.)

Finally, for those that are just chomping at the bit and raring to get right to work in the program, Chapter 3 is your quick-start guide. This chapter takes you from concept to completion, covering all the basic tools you need to create art and prepare it for mass consumption, either in print or on the Internet.

Chapter 1

Getting to Know Manga Studio

In This Chapter

- Understanding what Manga Studio can and can't do
- Getting familiar with the Manga Studio workspace
- Breaking down the functions of the Main toolbar, Page toolbar, and Tools palette
- Explaining what the other workspace palettes do in Manga Studio

When you buy a new program, do you actually read the instruction manual? It's okay. You can be honest — I won't tell anyone. The problem with skipping the instructions is that sometimes you miss out on many interesting tidbits you didn't know you could do with the program.

Well, you can think of this chapter as your Manga Studio cheat sheet — so you don't *have* to go read the instructions. This chapter is your general overview of the program. I discuss how it differs from other drawing programs, and I do a run-through of the Manga Studio workspace, along with all the cool toys that you can use when producing your manga or comic.

And if you haven't yet decided which version of Manga Studio to purchase, I discuss how the Debut and EX versions differ and which may be the one that best suits your drawing needs.

How Manga Studio Differs from Other Drawing Programs

In many ways, Manga Studio is similar to other drawing programs available, such as Adobe Photoshop or Corel Painter. Each of these programs is good in its own right, but because Manga Studio is first and foremost a comic creation program, it has a few functions that set it apart from other drawing programs — and that help make your life as a digital artist easier.

Don't let the name fool you!

The one critique I have about the program is that its name was changed from the original Japanese name of Comic Studio to Manga Studio here in America. I'm not really sure why the name was changed, aside from catching the eye of manga fans and artists. The problem with this name change is that when I talk to my Western-based comic book artist buddies, they think that the program is for the production of manga only. Far from it.

So let me reassure you — you can use Manga Studio to draw manga, superhero comics, or any other style or genre of sequential art. In the following figure, you can see three different styles of comics, all done in Manga Studio. The thing to keep in mind when using this program is that it's a tool to create art. It's no different than using traditional pens and pencils.

*Artwork courtesy of Michael Rhodes, Teyon Alexander (characters © Merge Comics), and Jason Masters (*God Complex *© Brandon Thomas and Jason Masters).*

Finding out what Manga Studio can do for you

Over the years of producing art digitally, I've tried out a *lot* of different programs. Each program would get the job done for me in one way or another, but many times I would find myself feeling very frustrated while working with them. Don't get me wrong, I think there are some flat-out awesome art programs on the market. The problem that I was having was while they're good *art* programs, I didn't find them to be very good *comic drawing* programs. As I experimented with these programs I could never find a good comfort level to create my work digitally from start to end. More often than not, I found myself working with multiple programs just to get a page done.

What I found when working in Manga Studio is that comfort level. It was the first program that I felt let me take advantage of the digital medium, while also having the "real world" feeling I normally had when working with real pencils and inks.

So, I thought I'd list a few features of Manga Studio that I found to be the most helpful to my work, and possibly will help you out as well.

Adding a personal touch to line work with custom rulers and guides

When using a program such as Photoshop or Painter, your ability to draw straight lines or custom curves can be a bit limited. You can always use the Line, Curve, or Pen tools, but because the lines all end up uniform, there's definitely a loss of personality. What you need are *virtual rulers* that can guide you in creating and adjusting straight edges, curves, and polygons of any size and shape. Then all you need to do is draw on them, much like their real-world counterparts, adding your own personal touches to the line work as you go along.

Manga Studio provides such a feature with its Ruler Layers feature, which lets you create as many rulers as you need for your page. Straight or curved, rectangular or polygonal, you can make any kind of ruler you need. In addition, you can scale and rotate the rulers. Do you find that your curved ruler isn't quite how you want it? Grab an endpoint and adjust it. It's just that simple.

To me, the best part is that when the ruler is set, you can vary your line weight as you draw along the ruler. It probably doesn't sound like much, but it's a great thing if you want to be able to add a bit of a personal flair to your technical line work. (See Chapter 8 for the details on using the Rule Layers feature.)

Eliminating shakiness in line work

If you've ever tried drawing or inking in Photoshop at anything less than 200% zoom, I'm sure you've noticed you need unnatural steadiness to draw anything resembling a straight line. Even at your steadiest, you notice some wobble to your line work. The only way to remedy that is to zoom in close to the page, but you risk losing sight of the picture as a whole as you work.

Manga Studio provides the ability to set a *variable correcting* to the line work. What this means is that as you work, the line adjusts itself to reduce or eliminate shakiness. The setting is variable, so you can make the correction as strong or as light as you like.

If you like to work while zoomed out but have been unhappy with how your line work has been coming out, this function may be just the remedy you need. (I tell you how to use this feature in Bonus Chapter 1 on the CD.)

Having thousands of screentones at your disposal

Manga Studio comes preinstalled with thousands of *screentones* (patterns of dots or other shapes that are used in black and white artwork to represent shades of gray) that you can't get with other drawing programs. In addition, these tones are *vector based,* which means that you can adjust the size of your finished page to any size you want, and the quality of the tones remains the same. This is something that even the Computones package for Photoshop can't do. (Incidentally, EX users can use Computones in addition to the program's main tones, so there's another advantage.)

Chapter 11 covers all you need to know about adding screentones to your work.

Working with multiple-page story files

What if you could contain all of the pages in your story or chapter in one place, which you could then easily preview as you go along? Manga Studio provides that with its story files. Here, you can create as many pages as you'd like, and they're organized in one location. You can then rearrange the pages, add new ones, or remove excess ones. And because all the page files are collected within one story file, all you need to do to view your story is just open one file, instead of several. Chapter 4 discusses how to work with these files.

Manga Studio EX users also can combine two consecutive pages into a spread — for those large action pieces you want to draw. (Conversely, you can split a spread into two separate pages.)

Knowing your page dimensions with print guides (preinstalled and custom)

Manga Studio includes page templates of various shapes and sizes that are useful if you're planning on printing your comic. In addition, for several of those templates, a set of print guides is included.

The print guide helps you keep track of what areas of the page are safe and what areas are cut off by the printer when preparing it for the final book. It's a very useful way to make sure any important artwork or dialogue isn't accidentally cut because you didn't keep track of where the cut-off points were. I go over the basics of the print guide in Chapter 4.

Creating custom word balloons (EX only)

Many programs offer the ability to add text to a page, but Manga Studio EX provides you the option of adding word balloons as well. These vector-based balloons can be squashed, stretched, and fitted to whatever dialogue you want to add. EX comes with a wide variety of balloon shapes to choose from, but if you don't see what you're looking for, you can always create your own! Check out Chapter 12 for more information on how the word balloon function works.